



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

PIFS(07) FEDMA.04

EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING

*Auckland, New Zealand
26-28 November 2007*

SESSION TWO

**REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FORUM BASIC EDUCATION
ACTION PLAN**

This paper, prepared by the Forum Secretariat, reviews progress in the implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and the outcomes of the national stocktake undertaken in 2007 in collaboration with the Education For All Mid Decade Assessment and suggests further actions for the consideration of Ministers.



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Summary brief

**SESSION TWO: REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FORUM BASIC
EDUCATION ACTION PLAN**

Purpose

This paper reviews regional and national progress in the implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP).

Background

2. The FBEAP was developed within the context of the Education for All initiative, with the goal of achieving universal and equitable participation and achievement and to ensure access and equity and improve quality and outcomes. The Ministers requested that the Forum Secretariat be mandated to facilitate the implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan.
3. The Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) is the major mechanism for implementing the FBEAP. The key focus of PRIDE is on education sector planning with the view to improve the capacity of Pacific ACP States to effectively plan and deliver quality basic education through formal and non-formal means. PRIDE will also focus on improving the coordination of donor inputs to assist countries to implement their plans. Several cross-cutting issues contained in the FBEAP, such as gender and good governance, are included in the implementation of PRIDE.
4. In the review of the FBEAP in January 2004, the Ministers of Education agreed to initiate a biennial stocktake of progress in the implementation of the FBEAP at the national as well as the regional level. The implementation and progress of PRIDE also forms a fundamental component of the FBEAP stocktake exercise. The first stocktake exercise was undertaken in September 2004 and was tabled at the Education Ministers' meeting in Apia, Samoa in May 2005. The second stocktake forms part of this review.

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5. This review provides an update of FBEAP regional initiatives that have been on-going and implemented since the last Education Ministers Meeting. It also provides an update of implementation of the FBEAP at the national level.

Issues

7. In 2008, it will be seven years since the FBEAP was first developed at the first Forum Education Ministers Meeting. Many regional aspects of the plan have been implemented with the main vehicle of implementation being PRIDE. The national stocktake of the FBEAP clearly shows that the priorities contained in it are still relevant and most are being addressed by countries.

8. It is timely that a comprehensive evaluation of the Action Plan is undertaken to determine whether the Plan continues to provide innovative Pacific responses to the challenge of ensuring that basic education serves as a critical element in building equity in education for development or whether changes to the Plan are required. Consideration should also be given to regional support mechanism for basic education such as that provided by PRIDE and the USP's Institute of Education.

9. Ministers' are asked to consider the outcomes and recommendations resulting from this review of the FBEAP that was undertaken in 2007.

Recommendations

10. Ministers are invited to:

- (a) Note the contents of the Regional Skills Development report and direct the Forum Secretariat to continue to seek funding for the proposed regional projects.
- (b) Note progress on the development of the Regional Qualifications Register.
- (c) Note the paper on non-formal education (PIFS(07)FEDMA.04(c)) and request UNESCO, regional organisations and other stakeholders to continue their work in non formal education, working towards the development of a regional approach to non formal education.
- (d) Consider, endorse and implement the outcomes of the regional workshop on early childhood care and education, specifically:
 - i. That each Government work with stakeholders to develop its national policy for children aged 0-8 years.
 - ii. (a) That a national advisory body is established to advise government on early childhood matters.
(b) That a regional council is established to coordinate professional and community issues relating to early childhood in the Pacific.
 - iii. That early childhood curriculum, teaching pedagogies, assessment strategies, resources and teacher education are grounded in local cultures and languages.
 - iv. That data for 0-8 year olds in both licensed and unlicensed centres are included in the education management information system.

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- (e) Consider, endorse and implement the outcomes of the regional workshop on Inclusive Education, specifically to:
 - i. Note the progress for Inclusive Education at the regional and national level and supporting the current paradigm shift from the charity and medical models to social and rights-based models of disability;
 - ii. Note the actions required in the Biwako Millennium Framework and the BMF plus 5 as a basis of advancing Inclusive Education at the policy level of Forum Island Countries;
 - iii. Endorse an integrated approach to Inclusive Education that recognises all children's right to education
 - iv. Endorse the use of the UNESCO toolkit on Inclusive Education as the basis for promoting the philosophies of Inclusive Education in Forum Island Countries.
- (f) Note the results of stocktake report on the implementation of the FBEAP at a national level;
- (g) Note the gaps identified at the national level in the provision and achievement of quality education;
- (h) Endorse a full evaluation of the FBEAP in 2008; including the Education Ministerial meeting process; and options for an appropriate regional support mechanism for education.



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**REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FORUM BASIC EDUCATION
ACTION PLAN**

Purpose

This paper reviews progress in the implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and suggests further actions for the consideration of Ministers. It highlights regional FBEAP activities that are currently being implemented and reviews how key areas of the FBEAP are reflected at national level.

Background

2. In 2001, Ministers of Education of Forum Island countries met in Auckland, New Zealand as directed by the Forum Economic Ministers to consider issues related to human resource development in the Forum region. The Ministers noted that while basic education is a priority in the region, this has not resulted in economic development. While recognising that some countries have made significant progress, and that the severity of problems with basic education varies significantly between countries, it appears that significant gains could be made through Forum members sharing their experiences, success and failures in basic education. Ministers noted the potential for sharing resources, particularly for inputs into basic education system across the region.
3. As such, the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) was developed within the context of the Education for All initiative, with the goal of achieving universal and equitable participation and achievement and to ensure access and equity and improve quality and outcomes. The Ministers requested that the Forum Secretariat be mandated to facilitate the arrangements to bring about the implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan.
4. The Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) is the major mechanism for implementing the FBEAP. The key focus of PRIDE is on education sector planning with the view to improve the capacity of Pacific ACP States to effectively plan and deliver quality basic education through formal and non-formal means. PRIDE

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will also focus on improving the coordination of donor inputs to assist countries to implement their plans. Several cross-cutting issues contained in the FBEAP, such as gender and good governance, are included in the implementation of PRIDE.

5. In the review of the FBEAP in January 2004, the Ministers of Education agreed to initiate a biennial stocktake of progress in the implementation of the FBEAP at the national as well as the regional level. The implementation and progress of PRIDE also forms a fundamental component of the FBEAP stocktake exercise. The 2004 Stocktake Report was tabled at the Education Ministers' meeting in Apia, Samoa in May 2005. ON the directive on Ministers at their 2006 meeting, the most recent stock-take has been conducted in conjunction with the UNESCO lead Mid-decade Assessment of the Education For All initiative.

6. Since the initial meeting in 2001, subsequent meetings have been held in 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2006. The outcomes of each meeting have been documented as a review of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan.

7. This review provides an update of FBEAP regional initiatives that have been on-going and implemented since the last Forum Education Ministers Meeting as well as the findings of a national stock-take of FBEAP implementation.

Regional Implementation of the FBEAP

8. Several regional initiatives are currently underway. These initiatives have been undertaken through multi-sectoral discussions and collaborative efforts among key stakeholders, such as through the CROP Human Resource Development Working Group. The 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2006 reviews of the implementation of the Forum Basic Education Action Plan are included in paper PIFS(07)FEDMA.03.

PRIDE

9. The Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of (Basic) Education (PRIDE) Project is the major vehicle for implementation of the FBEAP and is in its fourth year of implementation. The PRIDE Project Team will present an overview of the progress of the PRIDE Project.

10. The University of the South Pacific, as implementing agency for PRIDE, has expressed its intention to fully integrate the functions of PRIDE into its Institute of Education by the end of 2008.

Regional Skills Development Technical Assistance Project

11. In 2005, Forum Education Ministers agreed to the proposal that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) finance a comprehensive study of technical-vocational skills development in the Pacific Region in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum

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Secretariat (PIFS). This study is now complete and is reported on in paper PIFS(07)FEDMA.04(a).

12. The Forum Secretariat is discussing possible implementation of the recommendations of the report with other regional organisations and development partners.

Regional Qualifications Register

13. As directed by Ministers, the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA) with funding from AusAID, has commenced work on the design and development of a Pacific Regional Qualifications Register (RQR). The first phase is now complete and is reported on in paper PIFS(07)FEDMA.04(b).

14. A proposal for the further development of the RQR has been submitted to AusAID, which has indicated its agreement in principle to funding this initiative. It is envisioned that the project should start as soon as funding is secured and will be implemented over five years.

15. The Pacific Association of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, PATVET, is undertaking an inventory of courses offered by institutions in the region and this information will feed in to the Regional Qualifications Register. To date, PATVET has completed the inventory in seven countries and is working to complete the remaining countries.

Non-formal education

16. Ministers have recognised the importance of non-formal education (NFE), yet it has been a neglected area of research and policy information. Non-formal education has huge potential to offer education to those who miss out on opportunities in the formal system as well as providing a second chance for learning in a wide variety of areas including health, agriculture, entrepreneurship and lifeskills.

17. UNESCO has commissioned a study on NFE that is in paper PIFS(07)FEDMA.04(c).

Information Communications Technology (ICT)

18. Progress has been made in bringing ICT into Pacific education since the FBEAP was first formulated in 2001. A recent survey by USP¹ showed that most Pacific countries have made headway in integrating ICT into their curriculum and teacher training. The same survey showed considerable enthusiasm for school-wide, nation or region-wide ICT networks.

¹ Educational Technology in the Pacific: Facts and Figures (2007), www.usp.ac.fj/pelo

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19. At their 2006 Meeting, Education Ministers requested the Forum Secretariat to give priority to the furtherance of ICT needs for education in the context of the Regional Digital Strategy. Several agencies including the Forum Secretariat, SPC and USP are working towards enhancing education through ICT in Pacific education and this is expanded upon in paper PIFS(07)FEDMA.08.

Fast track initiative

20. At the 2006 Forum Education Ministers Meeting, Ministers heard a presentation from the World Bank outlining a proposal for the introduction of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) for Education for All in the Pacific. Ministers endorsed the proposal for the World Bank and its partner donors to explore how to establish the FTI in Pacific region via an association with the PRIDE project and its partners.

21. Following further discussions between relevant parties, it is possible that the FTI will be placed within the Institute of Education and will work closely with PRIDE. This will give the FTI the sustainability that is required. It is anticipated that this will be finalised in the near future. In the meantime, the World Bank is working bilaterally with some countries in the region.

Regional Workshops

22. The issue of duplication of activities, especially regional workshops, among agencies arose at the CROP Human Resource Development Workshop in 2006. Subsequently, a number of agencies agreed to work collaboratively to avoid duplicating each others work and to reduce the demands on countries. Those involved include the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, PRIDE, UNESCO, UNICEF, the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA) and Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL). Relevant non-governmental organisations and national Ministries of Education are included in planning and convening of these meetings.

23. In 2007, two such combined workshops were held: on Early Childhood Care and Education in Honiara, Solomon Islands in March and on Inclusive Education in Nadi, Fiji, in October. Feedback from both workshops was positive and the partner organisations involved believe that this is an exciting and progressive way of collaboration and it fits well with the principles of the Pacific Plan. Both workshops are reported on as papers PIFS(07)FEDMA.04(e) and PIFS(07)FEDMA.04(f).

Health and Education

24. At the 2006 Forum Education Ministers meeting, WHO outlined for the Ministers the concept of Health Promoting Schools, describing what is currently being undertaken in the Pacific and recommending opportunities for strengthening the partnership between education and health to enhance learning through improved livelihoods of children in the Pacific region. Following this mandate, WHO organised a regional workshop for

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education and health officials in October 2007. PRIDE has included a benchmark on health in its strategic planning benchmarks.

25. Also at the 2006 Education Ministers Meeting, the Vice President of Fiji urged Ministers to address the issue of sex education, Ministers requested the Forum Secretariat to work collaboratively with UNFPA and other partners to support curriculum development on sexual and reproductive health to address the issues of Sexually Transmitted Infections, HIV and AIDS and teenage pregnancy.

26. As a result, UNFPA and the Forum Secretariat invited countries to submit expressions of interest in implementing Family Life Education, which includes sexual and reproductive health education. Three Forum Island Countries have sought assistance from UNFPA in this regard; ongoing work was continued in one country and workshops were held in a further three countries to introduce the concept of Family Life Education.

Enterprise and Financial Education in the Curriculum

27. In August 2007 the Government of Samoa, SPBEA, UNDP Pacific Centre and UNDP Samoa Multi-Country Office signed a Memorandum of Agreement to introduce Enterprise and Financial Education in the secondary school curriculum. The project is a direct result of the request by Education Ministers to introduce Enterprise Education in the curriculum, which is also featured in the Pacific Plan. Also in August 2007 a contract was signed with Enterprise New Zealand Trust (ENZT), an organisation with 20 years of experience in developing and managing Enterprise and Financial Education in the curriculum, to provide technical services to the Government of Samoa Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MESC). The project is expected to take two years with a budget of US\$200,000. The project is managed by the Government of Samoa MESC and funded by the UNDP Pacific Centre.

28. In September 2007 the project kicked off with a series of meetings, workshops and school visits on the islands of Upolu and Savaii with various stakeholders including MESC staff, curriculum developers, principals, teachers, private sector representatives, NUS College of Education, SPBEA and ENZT. Enterprise and Financial Education is being developed specifically for the Samoa environment. It will not be a new curriculum subject but will be integrated into existing subjects such as science, language, commerce and technology. Curriculum materials development and teachers training is expected to take one year which will be followed by a one year pilot of the curriculum in four schools, two on each island. From February 2010 Enterprise and Financial Education is expected to be introduced in all Government Schools and possibly other schools in Samoa.

29. At the end of 2008 the project is expected to have made considerable progress. At this stage it will be determined whether it will be possible to commence introducing Enterprise and Financial Education in other Pacific Island countries from 2009 onwards, taking into consideration continued interest by the countries and funding availability.

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NATIONAL STOCKTAKE REPORT

30. In the review of the FBEAP in September 2006, Ministers of Education requested a comprehensive national Stocktake to be undertaken collaboratively with the Education For All (EFA) Mid –Decade review. Ministers' further recommended that the findings of this Stocktake be brought to the attention of Pacific Islands Forum Leaders.

Overview of the FBEAP Stocktake

31. It should be acknowledged that the majority of issues and activities highlighted in the FBEAP are already being addressed in FICs' national education strategic plans and national EFA action plans.

32. Following preliminary discussions on the joint FBEAP Stocktake / EFA MDA exercise undertaken during the EFA MDA Peer Review and Technical Training Workshop in November 2006, the countries agreed that measurements for these different initiatives (EFA, FBEAP, MDGs) should ultimately address the issue of how can the data currently being collected be used to improve the education sector nationally and regionally. Countries also agreed that there should be no demarcation or separate reporting on regional and global initiatives such as the EFA and FBEAP goals.

33. The final FBEAP Stocktake report is based on information provided through national action plans on EFA submitted by countries to UNESCO as part of the EFA MDA.

Analysis of National FBEAP Stocktake

34. While the countries acknowledged the existence of the additional FBEAP indicators and recalled their approval of the indicators during the 2006 Nadi workshop, they were adamant that the inclusion of the FBEAP indicators within their report was dependent of the relevance of the indicators for use at the national level.

35. Countries also indicated that while FBEAP indicators have been included as components within their EFA Mid Decade Assessment, analysis of these indicators would be addressed generally throughout their report and not as a separate issue.

Delivery and Resourcing of Basic Education

36. The delivery and resourcing of basic education focused on areas of quality of education, the percentage of teachers with relevant skills and knowledge, government contribution to school fees and compulsory and free education.

37. Several countries stressed that the provision of quality education depended on the quality of the personnel employed to teach and develop the young people of the nation. Countries acknowledged that to improve the quality of education, there is a need to upgrade teacher competency and closely monitor teachers' performance to ensure that

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they were providing quality service. The need to revise the quality and relevance of the school curriculum to meet the needs of the children were also highlighted. Several countries also highlighted the need to establish libraries in all schools to improve the quality and delivery of basic general education.

38. Several common factors that influence the delivery of quality education and the improvement and achievement of national goals in education were identified by the smaller island countries. These factors included the continuous lack of trained teachers, lack of proper classroom and storage facilities, lack of a national curriculum framework, and the lack of involvement and input from other government sectors and NGOs.

39. All countries acknowledged that despite the provision of “free education” by government, education is not totally free. Many parents are still unable to meet the additional costs of education such as transportation, maintenance of school buildings and contribution fees. Also despite the availability of free education, many children with disabilities are unable to attend school due to the lack of accessibility to most public schools.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

40. Several countries highlighted that the government’s education system do not have pre-schools, kindergartens or playschools for children between the ages of one and five years old. In the majority of countries, early childhood care is organized and administered by non-state actors, church and religious groups and community groups.

41. Several factors that affected the delivery of ECCE at national level were identified by the countries. These included the shortage of appropriately qualified and trained ECCE teachers, insufficient in-service training for ECCE teachers, the relevance of the ECCE curriculum, inadequate resources and the dilapidated conditions of ECCE classrooms and centres.

Children and Youth with Disabilities

42. Currently, the responsibility of educating children with special needs has been left largely to the collective effort and commitment of parents, teachers and the community in several countries. This has been attributed to the choice of many families who prefer to keep their children with special needs within family and village care.

43. The lack of data on children with special needs was identified by several countries as a key factor that impacted on the delivery of education for children and youth with disabilities. While children with disabilities are mainstreamed into the education system, there is no accurate data to specify how many children there are in the community who require special needs care. Other key factors include the lack of a recognized official policy for special education, the lack of support for parents and teachers as well as the lack of trained personnel in the special needs area.

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44. Several countries have recommended several initiatives to address the factors identified. These include the collecting of data detailing the number of children with special needs; the need for a properly constituted policy on Special Education to improve effective and quality of services to students with special needs; support for training of teachers in special needs through the University of the South Pacific and the establishment of a support body for children, parents and schools catering for special needs.

Gender and Equity issues

45. Several countries acknowledge gender and equity issues as a low priority. This is based on the view that since education is free and compulsory, access by girls to education is not a problem. Countries have also indicated that there is no gender disparity in education, as all students are treated as equal and all subjects are available to all students.

46. However, for some countries the issue of a male dominated society has been highlighted as a reason why females have had limited access to social and educational opportunities. These restrictions were associated with the predominant socio-cultural view which suggests that, because most females are expected to become housewives, there is no need for them to attend school and achieve educational success.

47. These countries have also highlighted that there is limited infrastructure and facilities for girls within the education system. A significant number of secondary school places are in boarding schools which were originally built for boys. This prevents academically eligible girls from access to education during the later years of school because of a lack of accommodation places in the boarding facility. These countries acknowledge that the provision of additional boarding facilities designed for girls should also facilitate greater participation of girls in high school.

48. A few countries also highlighted a limited enabling environment within the education sector and the lack of support services to reduce gender gaps in TVET.

Qualification level and training of teachers

51. While considerable efforts have been made in recent years, on-going commitment to have teaching staff gain the qualifications and experience for the future development and strengthening of the education system is needed. This commitment requires training in specialist areas, local training in general areas and the professional development of all education staff.

52. All countries acknowledged insufficient numbers of teachers in their countries. Due to this shortage of teachers and lack of funds for teacher training, several countries utilise under-trained teachers so as to ensure the continuation of school programmes.

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53. Some countries also indicated that training provided was inadequate to prepare teachers to implement policies and school curriculum documents. The lack of ongoing professional development of teachers in the area of literacy and numeracy was also highlighted as a key issue.

54. These countries have indicated that provisions are currently being made to continue upgrading the qualification programmes for teachers and trainees. However, the lack of training infrastructure and funding has contributed to the slow progress in the training of teachers.

Financing Education

55. The education budget receives a large portion of money from national budgets with the majority of the budget spent on Ministry of Education personnel and teachers' salaries. Countries have since advocated for a performance based budget which emphasize how the budget will assist with the overall improvement of the education system. Ministries and departments of education are also tasked to ensure that the education programmes and budgets are linked to the national vision and strategies.

56. Donor support continues to play a significant part in the provision of quality education in countries. Several countries have acknowledged that without funding and technical assistance from the donor community, it would be very difficult to implement the majority of activities identified by the education sector.

Language Policy – use of indigenous language as the language in the early years of education

57. Several countries have indicated that the use of the local vernacular is encouraged and have advocated for its use in pre-schools. However, English is still widely used and preferred by most local parents to be their children's first language of instruction.

Greater participation by non-government partners can increase the level of resources available, and increase the relevance and effectiveness of the learning process

58. In the majority of countries NGOs, religious and church groups and community groups drive the non-formal education system, where training is offered to those who missed out on formal education opportunities. However, while non-formal education policies place an emphasis on strong partnerships between the national government and all stakeholders involved in implementing non-formal education, the coordination of these partnerships is weak

59. Several countries also highlighted that other government ministries and departments also develop their own policies in non-formal education but this was done in isolation from the education ministry. This has been attributed to the lack of capacity within the Ministry of Education's non-formal education division to properly coordinate with key partners and stakeholders. Lack of funding for human resources and

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infrastructure to support the non-formal education system and the need to ensure continuing support for non-formal providers was also acknowledged.

Technical and Vocation Education and Training

60. All countries recognise the importance of technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a critical component for achieving social and economic development. However, there was a real need to strike a balance between the type of TVET needed for the formal sector and for the majority of school leavers who would not find paid employment.

61. Several key issues that impact on the delivery of quality and essential TVET programmes were raised by several countries. These issues included the lack of a national TVET system and a national TVET policy. Countries stated that the lack of a national TVET policy contributed to uncoordinated training programmes and a national TVET system was needed to facilitate TVET policy implementation.

62. This lack of an appropriate TVET system and policy directions also contributed to other issues including the lack of coordination in the development of formal and non-formal TVET curricula, the lack of qualified TVET trainers in the formal and non-formal sectors and the lack of training centres in the rural and outer islands. Several countries also stated that although TVET is offered at Polytechnic Colleges and other institutions in-country, there is still an evident lack of TVET providers and a limited variety of TVET courses on offer.

63. Several countries indicated the need to revitalize technical colleges and vocational centres and to make these more sustainable and responsive to local practical needs. A particular focus on teaching adults with relevant skills as well as integrating gender perspectives in TVET programmes were also advocated.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Education

64. The shortfall in the skills of teachers particularly in the area of ICT for education was a key issue highlighted by several countries. These countries also stated that most of the outer islands do not have electricity, thus making it very difficult to set up ICT systems. While electric generators were sometimes used, these were not very reliable.

65. The need to revitalize the education management information system and the utilization of wireless technology were acknowledged as key issues to be addressed.

Education for Sustainable Development

66. There is a need to determine learning and life-skills needs of adults and to implement programmes that specifically meet these needs. Currently, existing education policies in several countries do not fully address the need to ensure that the learning needs of young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate

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learning and life skills programmes. Undermining these problems is a lack of awareness of the existing educational opportunities as well as the lack of available opportunities for adults to start their education.

67. Some countries also highlighted that the secondary school system was widely considered to lack relevance to village life and to the country's labour market needs. Too much emphasis was placed, particularly at senior secondary level, on the expectation of future white collar jobs or professional employment. Also the current provisions by government and NGOs to address the learning needs of the young people and adults were identified as inadequate.

68. As such, the need to provide alternative programs that specifically meet the needs of at-risk, drop-out, and retained students as well as the growing number of adults who do not have appropriate learning and life-skills programs was acknowledged.

Health Promoting Schools

69. Good health is essential for success in school. With the expansion of education, more children are attending schools. The health and education authorities accept that schools are the ideal place where both can work together to improve and maintain a child's health. Good health for children means higher school enrolment and attendance, and optimizes government's investment in education as health programmes also leads to greater social equity.

70. In several countries, the Ministry of Health actively promotes on a regular basis the prevention of diseases to secondary school students. However, many parents are unwilling to discuss sex issues with children at home or allow teachers and educators to discuss these issues at school. Therefore, a carefully thought out school health curriculum is required that should be accept by all sections of society. Countries acknowledged that there is an urgent need of this curriculum due to the dangers of STIs and HIV and AIDS and have advocated that the ministries of education and health work together on the development of the health curricula.

71. Several countries have also indicated that while primary schools have a health curriculum, these need to be extended to encompass secondary education and the community as well. In addition, classroom instructions are mostly lecture-based. Skills-based activities need to be developed and implemented to promote healthy living and prevention of important health problems.

72. The majority of countries have developed HIV and AIDS policies for schools and have provided training to most students and staff. However, all ministries need to develop comprehensive health-related school policies that encompass more than just HIV and AIDS. These policies need to promote a healthy, safe, and secure school environment, guarantee equal rights and opportunities for health education and regulate provision of skills-based health education and services.

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National Education System

73. Several countries highlighted, as their number one priority, the need to improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all, so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Various countries also indicate commitment to developing an education system which provides quality life long learning to all, irrespective of gender, age, economic status and ability.

74. Several concerns over the relevance of the curriculum were raised by several countries. A key concern was that the school curriculum did not cater for the needs of the majority of the population whose livelihoods were dependent on subsistence farming. Also highlighted was the need for the education system to preserve and respect traditional cultures and values. The countries highlighted that a relevant and effective national education system must cater for national and international challenges.

Conclusions to National Stocktake

75. As advocated in the FBEAP, several countries have highlighted the need to strengthen governance and policy setting as key mechanisms to support the performance of education systems. Also identified were several key priorities for improving national education systems. These included the provision of:

- more training and in-service opportunities for teachers at most levels,
- adequate and improved facilities and resources, whether it is a centre for further learning for adults, more housing for teachers at remote islands or well equip classrooms,
- training in research and the collection of relevant educational data.
- on-going curriculum review with the aim of bringing the “real world” into the realm of curriculum and instruction.
- new programmes particularly for the TVET sector,
- continued revision of the primary and secondary school curricula,
- incorporating the provision of early childhood education into the government education system, and
- integrating ICT at all levels within the education system.

The future of the FBEAP

76. In 2008, it will be seven years since the FBEAP was first developed at the first Forum Education Ministers Meeting. Many regional aspects of the plan have been implemented with the main vehicle of implementation being PRIDE. The national stocktake of the FBEAP clearly shows that the priorities contained in it are still relevant and most are being addressed by countries.

77. It is timely that a comprehensive evaluation of the Action Plan is undertaken to determine whether the Plan continues to provide innovative Pacific responses to the challenge of ensuring that basic education serves as a critical element in building equity

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in education for development or whether changes to the Plan are required. Consideration should also be given to regional support mechanism for basic education such as that provided by PRIDE and the USP's Institute of Education.

Recommendations

78. Ministers are invited to:

- (a) Note the contents of the Regional Skills Development report and direct the Forum Secretariat to continue to seek funding for the proposed regional projects.
- (b) Note progress on the development of the Regional Qualifications Register.
- (c) Note the paper on non-formal education (PIFS(07)FEDMA.04(c)) and request UNESCO, regional organisations and other stakeholders to continue their work in non formal education, working towards the development of a regional approach to non formal education.
- (d) Consider, endorse and implement the outcomes of the regional workshop on early childhood care and education, specifically:
 - ii. That each Government work with stakeholders to develop its national policy for children aged 0-8 years.
 - ii. (a) That a national advisory body is established to advise government on early childhood matters.
(b) That a regional council is established to coordinate professional and community issues relating to early childhood in the Pacific.
 - v. That early childhood curriculum, teaching pedagogies, assessment strategies, resources and teacher education are grounded in local cultures and languages.
 - vi. That data for 0-8 year olds in both licensed and unlicensed centres are included in the education management information system.
- (e) Consider, endorse and implement the outcomes of the regional workshop on Inclusive Education, specifically to:
 - v. Note the progress for Inclusive Education at the regional and national level and supporting the current paradigm shift from the charity and medical models to social and rights-based models of disability;
 - vi. Note the actions required in the Biwako Millennium Framework and the BMF plus 5 as a basis of advancing Inclusive Education at the policy level of Forum Island Countries;
 - vii. Endorse an integrated approach to Inclusive Education that recognises all children's right to education
 - viii. Endorse the use of the UNESCO toolkit on Inclusive Education as the basis for promoting the philosophies of Inclusive Education in Forum Island Countries.
- (i) Note the results of stocktake report on the implementation of the FBEAP at a national level;
- (j) Note the gaps identified at the national level in the provision and achievement of quality education;

FORUM EYES ONLY

- (k) Endorse a full evaluation of the FBEAP in 2008; including the Education Ministerial meeting process; and options for an appropriate regional support mechanism for education.